



March 6-7, 2017 -- Election analysis and deep data mining are not new

publication date: Mar 6, 2017

[Previous](#) | [Next](#)

March 6-7, 2017 -- Election analysis and deep data mining are not new

The secretive billionaire who funded Donald Trump chief strategist Stephen Bannon while he was editor of Breitbart News, also happens to have invested heavily in a U.S. election analysis and deep data mining firm called Cambridge Analytica. In 2015, Robert Mercer, a hedge fund tycoon, invested in the Cambridge Analytica because of its work in the "behavioral micro-targeting" of voters via the Internet and social media. Cambridge, on whose board of directors Bannon sat, specializes in advancing the political fortunes of right-wing politicians and causes.

Furthermore, while there is no evidence of Russian involvement in the company, there is plenty of evidence that Cambridge Analytica's British parent company, London-based SCL (Strategic Communication Laboratories) Group, founded in 1993 and which has links to British intelligence and the granddaddy of all behavioral modification centers, London's Tavistock Institute, had a major role in the election. It was Tavistock, which was formed before World War II and was heavily involved in wartime propaganda campaigns during the conflict, that conducted basic research into the use of "psychometrics," including "herd behavior" and "target audience analysis," now employed by companies like SCL and Cambridge Analytica. SCL has been contracted to unnamed military and intelligence clients for purposes of developing "disinformation" campaigns. One could also refer to "disinformation" by its current in vogue appellation, "fake news."

Further refined by the Psychometrics Center at Cambridge University in the UK, the current application of "psychographic analysis" collects data from online surveys, Facebook "likes," consumer habits, Twitter messages, and other personal data sets, to customize political messaging to individuals. Cambridge Analytica provided psychometric support to the Brexit "Yes" campaign in the 2016 referendum for the United Kingdom to leave the European Union.

SCL has engaged in election influence operations in Italy, Latvia, Ukraine, Albania, Romania, South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, Mauritius, India, Indonesia, Thailand, Taiwan, Colombia, Antigua, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Trinidad and Tobago.

During the 2016 U.S. election, Cambridge claims to have collected 5000 data points on over 220 million Americans. Cambridge also provided election support to GOP presidential candidate Ben Carson. The firm's support for North Carolina Senate candidate Thom Tillis helped him defeat Democratic incumbent Kay Hagan in 2014 and it also helped to propel Republican Tom Cotton into the Senate seat in Arkansas.

British intelligence, not Russian intelligence, appears to be all over the 2016 U.S. presidential election. It was ex-British Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) officer Christopher Steele who compiled the "Russian dossier" on Donald Trump and reported sexual encounters with Russian women in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Steele, the chief of London-based Orbis Business Intelligence, Ltd., had originally been hired by the Jeb Bush campaign before providing intelligence to the Hillary Clinton campaign.

Cambridge has offices in London, Washington, DC, and New York. It originally was contracted to the Ted Cruz campaign and after that campaign went down in flames after the Indiana GOP primary, Trump hired on two Cruz campaign officials, Bannon and Kellyanne Conway.

There is a darker side to the work of Cambridge Analytica and SCL. Not only can the technology employed by these firms influence elections, it can also provoke violence. These companies also know how to exploit popular fears. In Kenya, SCL collected tribal data for the 2013 presidential election. Violence between rival ethnic groups did break out across Kenya, eventually resulting in the winners of the race for president and vice president, Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto, being indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC). The prosecution of Kenyatta and Ruto fell apart but the damage to Kenya's political system is still being felt, just as the effects of the election of Trump and Mike Pence in the United States are still being experienced in mass protests across the country and political gridlock in Washington.

SCL was on the scene for the violence-scarred 2007 Nigerian presidential election, which was won by Umaru Musa

Yar'Adua with 70 percent of the vote. As in Kenya, most of the political violence in Nigeria was tribal-based. Yar'Adua's opponents claimed the election was rigged. On November 23, 2009, Yar'Adua left Nigeria to be treated for pericarditis, a heart disease, in Saudi Arabia. Vice President Goodluck Jonathan was declared acting president on February 9, 2010. Yar'Adua was never seen in public again. He returned under the cover of darkness to Abuja on February 24, 2010 and was believed to be on a life support machine. The president died on May 5, 2010.

SCL came up with a slogan and symbol to help the opposition People's Partnership coalition defeat the incumbent People's National Movement (PNM) of incumbent prime minister Patrick Manning in the 2010 general election in Trinidad and Tobago. The slogan was simply "Do So" and the symbol was crossed arms to form an "X." Manning went down to defeat and was succeeded by Kamla Persad-Bissessar. The decision by SCL to come up with successful sloganeering, was based, in part, on the fact that the PNM government enjoyed an edge of 22,152 Facebook "likes" to the opposition's total of 19,273. The opposition needed a remake and re-branding. The Trinidad and Tobago slogan was similar to Trump's simple "Make America Great Again," which also proved successful.



Targeted symbology is a mainstay of SCL and Cambridge's approach to election influence operations. Trinidad's "Do So" campaign [left and center]. Trump's "Make America Great Again" motto [right].

Ironically, the same corporate group that helped propel Trump into the White House in 2016 was also involved in the 2004 "Orange Revolution" in Ukraine that saw the elected president, Viktor Yanukovich, turned out of office by the U.S.-backed Viktor Yushchenko. SCL claims that with the "aid of modern research and efficient campaign intervention techniques," it "succeeded in maintaining the cohesion of the [Orange] coalition." In 2014, Yanukovich, who was elected in 2010, was ousted by another U.S.-backed coalition. It turned out that advising Yanukovich was none other than Trump's short-lived campaign manager Paul Manafort. Cambridge Analytica and its parent, SCL, which were assisting the Trump campaign, were working at loggerheads with Manafort in Ukraine. It was the ouster of Yanukovich by a pro-American and pro-EU right-wing government in Kiev in 2014 that led to the retrocession of Crimea to Russia, a rebellion by Russian-speaking Ukrainians in the eastern Donbass region, Western economic sanctions on Russia, a breakdown in U.S.-Russian relations, and now, charges that Russia interfered in the U.S. presidential election. Yet, it is SCL/Cambridge Analytica, with their ties to MI-6, that first triggered off the Ukrainian crisis with the Orange Revolution of 2004.

The real question that should be asked in Washington is not "What Role did Russia play in the 2016 election?" but "Why was a British firm linked to the Tavistock Institute involved in the 2016 U.S. election and the Ukrainian election that originally precipitated the Ukrainian/Russian crisis?"

Generally, readers are solely responsible for the content of the comments they post on this web site. Comments are subject to the site's terms and conditions of use and do not necessarily reflect the opinion or approval of Wayne Madsen Report.com. Readers whose comments violate the terms of use may have their comments removed without notification. Please do not post hate messages as this is a violation of British laws against racist and xenophobic messages. WMR's web service is based in Wales, UK and is subject to UK law.

[Back to top](#)

[Previous](#) | [Next](#)